



DISTRICT ATTORNEY FOR THE 15TH JUDICIAL COURT

SERVING ACADIA, LAFAYETTE & VERMILION PARISHES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DA FILES VERMILION SUIT SEEKING DAMAGES AND RESTORATION AS RESULT OF MARSH EROSION, SALTWATER INTRUSION, RADIOACTIVE WATER RELEASE AND INCREASE IN FLOODING

ABBEVILLE--The District Attorney for the 15th Judicial District, Keith Stutes, has announced the filing of major litigation to recover for damages, restoration costs and actual restoration as a result of oil and gas exploration, production and transportation operations in Vermilion Parish which have "caused substantial damages to land and water bodies, geological formations, and cultural and economic opportunities in violation of Louisiana state law, rules and regulations."

The 15th Judicial District includes Acadia, Lafayette and Vermilion parishes.

The action by Stutes makes Vermilion Parish one of six Louisiana coastal parishes filing such claims. The others are Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Jefferson, Lafourche and Cameron parishes.

The Louisiana legislature established a statutory standard for protecting the coast of Louisiana with the passage of the Coastal Zone Management Law in 1978. Prior to the passage of this legislation, various rules, regulations, field orders and orders by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and the Louisiana Stream Control Commission were required to be followed by those in oil and gas exploration, production and transportation activities.

Under the 1978 law, parishes in the Coastal Zone Management Area could also establish local Coastal Zone Management plans. Vermilion chose not to do so, and, when parishes do not have a local plan, the 1978 law designates the local District Attorney as the public official who is obligated to pursue recovery of damages that occur in the coastal zone for violations of the law.

"While we all recognize the tremendous impact oil and gas activities have had on our local economy, every person who has ever fished, hunted and enjoyed the natural beauty of Vermilion Parish is aware of the environmental issues caused by oil and gas activities," Stutes said.

"The cleanup and restoration of these damages will create new and enormous economic and employment opportunities for the people of Vermilion Parish...restoring our coast and environment is an important economic impetus for our citizens," Stutes continued. "Moreover, as District Attorney, it is my fiduciary responsibility to see to it this law is enforced uniformly and the law is made to work with no show of favoritism," Stutes continued.

"The message is simple: clean up the mess that you have made and restore our coast to its original condition," Stutes concluded.

The Vermilion lawsuit contends the named defendants did not comply with the law and/or rules and orders resulting in identifiable, specific, and substantial harm and that the defendants failed to comply with permits the defendants obtained to engage in coastal activities or failed to obtain coastal permits at all.

In all instances, it is contended the defendants failed to revegetate, refill, clean and detoxify and restore the impacted area to its original condition as required by state law.

The Vermilion lawsuit names the following as defendants:

AMERICAN TRADING AND PRODUCTION CORPORATION
APACHE CORPORATION
BASF CORPORATION
BAY COQUILLE, INC.
BP AMERICA PRODUCTION COMPANY
BRAMMER ENGINEERING, INC.
CAMEX OPERATING COMPANY
CAMEX, INC.
CASTEX ENERGY, INC.
CENTURY EXPLORATION NEW ORLEANS, LLC
COLUMBIA GULF TRANSMISSION, LLC
CONLEY P. SMITH OPERATING COMPANY
CONLEY P. SMITH, LLC
CONOCOPHILLIPS COMPANY
ENABLE OKLAHOMA INTRASTATE TRANSMISSION, LLC
ENERGEN RESOURCES CORPORATION
ENERGYQUEST II, LLC
EP ENERGY E&P COMPANY, L.P.
EXCHANGE OIL & GAS CORPORATION
EXXON MOBIL CORPORATION
FREEPORT-MCMORAN OIL & GAS L.L.C.
GRAHAM ROYALTY, LTD.
GULFPORT ENERGY CORPORATION
HESS CORPORATION
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY
JANEX OIL CO., INC.
LATEX-STAR, INC.
LLOG EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION COMPANY, L.L.C.
MANTI EXPORATION OPERATING, LLC
MCMORAN OIL & GAS LLC
MOBIL OIL EXPLORATION & PRODUCING SOUTHEAST INC.
MOSBACHER ENERGY COMPANY
NOBLE ENERGY, INC.
PACIFIC ENTERPRISES OIL COMPANY
PETROHAWK ENERGY CORPORATION
PETRO-HUNT, L.L.C.
PIONEER NATURAL RESOURCES USA, INC.
QUEST EXPLORATION L.C.C.
SAMSON CONTOUR ENERGY E&P, LLC
SAMSON RESOURCES COMPANY
SHELL OFFSHORE, INC.
SHELL OIL COMPANY
SHORELINE SOUTHEAST LLC
SWEPI LP
TENNESSEE GAS PIPELINE COMPANY, L.L.C.
TEXAS PETROLEUM INVESTMENT COMPANY
THE LOUISIANA LAND AND EXPLORATION COMPANY, L.L.C.
THE MERIDIAN RESOURCE & EXPLORATION LLC
UNION OIL COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA

Richard Broussard, a partner in the Lafayette law firm of Broussard & David, will be handling the litigation for the 15th Judicial District Attorney's office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Paul G. Moresi, III, Assistant District Attorney, 15th JDC
(337) 898-0111.